

**Public Service Award on the Occasion of the  
100th Anniversary of The United Synagogue of Conservative Jewry**  
(The audience is the Rabbinical Assembly)

People sometimes ask me whether I'm a better Congressman because I am Jewish or a better Jew because I am a Congressman. I hope it's a little of both.

Our country is founded on the separation of church and state, but Rabbis and congressman happen to have a lot in common. We share a dedication to public service. We are inspired by values that empower us to help uplift our communities.

The mitzvah of *Tikkun Olam* is a commandment to repair the world. Here in Congress it is an outlook that underscores the importance of

- Safeguards for the environment and standards for clean drinking water.
- Preservation of clean air and natural resources
- The protection of beautiful open spaces like the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve from oil exploration.

The mitzvah of *Tzedakah*, the principle of helping those who are vulnerable and in need, is at the heart of my work to

- Help seniors afford their prescription drugs
- Make sure that children have access to health care, the homeless are sheltered, and the hungry are fed

*Pikuach Nefesh*, the commandment to save lives, compels us to

- Work against tobacco marketing to children.
- Encourage the development of groundbreaking vaccines and treatments for disease.
- Make sure that nursing homes abide by standards that preserve dignity and a proper level of care.

And of course we share a commitment to Israel, which is at the heart of Judaism and the center of U.S. policy in the Middle East.

September 11 has placed Rabbis, teachers, parents, and public officials in the extraordinarily difficult task of trying to reassure constituent, congregations, and families in a time of fear and distress.

Since today is Rosh Chodesh Adar, perhaps we should take some advice on how to handle the threat of terrorism from the story of Purim: Just like Haman, we must expose terrorists and eliminate them from our midst. Just like Mordechai we can succeed if we are strong and proud of our identity as Americans and as Jews. Just like Esther, we will persevere with the strength of our togetherness.

I deeply appreciate this honor and I take this opportunity to congratulate you on 100 years of achievement.